Incivility and Bullying Code Word

According to Wikipedia a **code word** is a word or a phrase designed to convey a predetermined meaning to a receptive audience, while remaining inconspicuous to the uninitiated. The Oxford Dictionary of the US Military defines a code word as a word that has been assigned a classification and a classified meaning to safeguard intentions and information regarding a classified plan or operation.

Hospitals may adopt a code word or gesture that staff may use to alert or notify others that they feel bullied. Staff must be educated on the meaning of the word or gesture and must also be aware of how to respond when the code is employed. A code word spoken out loud or a gesture subtly made can prompt others to intervene and stop the inappropriate behavior. The code and expected response should be outlined in the organization's policies and procedures. Staff may also have a hotline to call for assistance or guidance. The ability to use a code word or gesture may give staff some comfort knowing that they have a way to seek out assistance or alert others. It's important to understand that the organization can choose any code word or gesture that's appropriate in a particular environment to signify that a person is experiencing bullying.

Examples of Code Words and Gestures that may be considered are:

- Code White
- Code Grey
- Code Black
- Code 88
- Ouch
- Dr. Strong
- Dr. Heavy
- Strong Alert
- Pulling on one's ear lobe
- Tapping one's nose